

A COURSE OF  
PAINTING IN NEUTRAL TINT

—♦—  
R. P. LEITCH







My son



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A COURSE OF  
PAINTING IN NEUTRAL TINT.

WITH

*TWENTY-FOUR PLATES,*

FROM DESIGNS BY

R. P. LEITCH.



CASSELL PETTER & GALPIN:

*LONDON, PARIS & NEW YORK.*



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# PAINTING IN NEUTRAL TINT.

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THE instruction given in this book is intended to form a medium between "Painting in Sepia" and the "Course of Water Colour Painting." The studies are therefore executed in sepia, with the addition of a single grey tint; and as this varies according to the subject, the following hints in relation to the colours from which different greys may be mixed are given:—

It must be explained, that all these colours being more or less transparent, the white of the paper becomes, as it were, one of the constituent colours.

Corresponding greys, to be used as body-colours for painting on tinted paper, may be mixed by the addition of white; but there is, of course, the risk of changes taking place in the white, by which the tint will be more or less affected. The following methods of mixing various greys will be found useful:—

## I. LAKE AND INDIGO.

Lake is a beautiful transparent red colour, which washes well, and works very smoothly. The crimson lake has a bluish tint, whilst the scarlet lake has a tendency to orange. The crimson lake is generally used in mixing greys.

Indigo is a dark blue colour, which is tinged with black and red; it is, in fact, a black purple, and a good imitation of it may be made by mixing Prussian blue, crimson lake, and black, giving, of course, a predominance to the blue. Indigo washes well, but is very powerful, so that a very small quantity of it will be required in mixing the grey.



## 2. LAKE AND COBALT.

Cobalt is a very clear light blue. It is rather heavy, and unless well mixed, has a tendency to settle ; it should therefore be stirred each time a brushful is taken.

Cobalt alone may be used for skies, and may be worked in different tones to produce a pearly or full tint.

## 3. MADDER BROWN AND COBALT.

Madder brown is a deep, warm colour, permanent, and of great power. It washes well ; but in mixing greys it should be very sparingly used.

## 4. MADDER LAKE, COBALT, AND YELLOW OCHRE.

Madder lake is a rose red, very similar to rose madder—permanent and transparent, but not possessing much power. It is well adapted for mixing delicate greys, and with cobalt only produces a clear and beautiful tint.

Yellow ochre is a semi-transparent colour, of a warm yellow hue, which washes and mixes well. It is added to a grey when a slightly greenish shade is required.

## 5. INDIAN RED AND COBALT.

This mixture makes a reddish, dull grey, and care must be taken that the red is not overdone.

Indian red is a dull colour, of considerable body, and washes very well.

Another good grey may be mixed from Indian red and indigo.

## 6. LIGHT RED AND COBALT.

Light red is a colour of a dull orange tint ; it has considerable body, and washes well. It may be used with indigo also, according to the shade of grey required.



7. INDIGO, LAKE, AND GAMBOGE.

This is, of course, a rather greenish grey, which shade is caused by the mixture of the gamboge with the indigo, which is more or less neutralised by the addition of the lake.

Gamboge is a clear bright yellow colour, which is very transparent. Only a small quantity must be used in mixing grey, as gamboge has the property of drying darker than it appears when wet.

8. INDIGO, LAKE, AND BURNT SIENNA.

Burnt sienna is a bright red brown, and is very transparent; it is extensively used in landscape painting, in shading yellow colours, and in giving the mellow autumnal tint to trees, &c.

It is necessary that the students should be acquainted with the methods above given, in order that they may be able to give the desired tint to the sky; for it must be remembered that the general tone of the sky will impart some of its own hue to the whole scene; and thus, although only the sky may show the colour in its purity, in reality it pervades the whole, and in many cases it is required to carry a wash of the sky-colour over the entire picture, not only before local colours are applied, but again during the progress of the work.

Although the students are urged to copy carefully the examples here given, they are still urged to remember that copying merely supplies the means to the end itself; and they should therefore observe the effects visible in nature, an exact appreciation of which is so important to the landscape painter.

It will often be noticed, that although the tops of mountains are at a great distance from the eye, they still appear more plainly than their bases. This is owing to the mists which are constantly playing over the surface of the earth—especially in summer or autumnal mornings and evenings—but which do not reach the summits of the hills.

The students must also understand, that however important linear perspective may be, as the only scientific means



of rendering forms correctly, it is not sufficient for the purposes of painting in which the aid of aerial perspective is required, in order to give to each object the appearance of distance, and to modify its colour or shades in accordance with the atmospheric medium through which it is seen.

Dark objects become apparently lighter by distance, and light objects seem darker, but not in like manner, for lights are slowly lost, whilst the darker objects lose colour at a greater rate. The distance at which they both become of one hue is dependent on the state of the atmosphere and the nature of the ground.

In mixing the various tints, the colours of which they are to be composed should be rubbed in separate compartments of the slab, or round the palette. They should then be mixed with the brush in the central part of the palette. By this plan the proper proportion of each colour can be better judged than if all are rubbed on one spot, besides which the ends of the colours are kept unsoiled by the mixture.

All colours, tints, or shades, whether light or dark, should be made as liquid as circumstances allow, so as to insure their flowing freely; for the surface of the paper being granulated, it is necessary that the colour should fill the interstices, instead of merely touching the tops of the elevations, in which case, the surface, when dry, would appear dotted all over with minute white spots, caused by the uncovered recesses into which the colour had not sunk.

Should the paper appear rather greasy, so that it resists the colour, a minute quantity of prepared ox-gall may be dissolved in the water with which the colours are mixed; but this must be done very carefully, as the ox-gall tends to diminish the brilliancy of the colours, particularly such as contain any blue, to which it gives a greenish shade. If the paper should have the tendency to absorb the colours too rapidly, a small quantity of gum arabic should be dissolved in water, which should be washed over it; a process which may be repeated until the desired effect is attained. The paper should always be larger than the picture to be executed upon it, in order that trials may be made before the work is commenced. By this plan much annoyance and disappointment will be prevented.



The following explanations of terms used in Landscape Painting will be found useful :—

ACCESSORIES are adjuncts introduced into a picture to give relief and to add beauty, without being absolutely necessary to the subject represented.

ACCIDENTS or ACCIDENTALS are lights, objects, or small groups, suggested by convenience, and sometimes introduced as afterthoughts, not having been included in the original composition of the picture. They assist materially in the effect, but care must be taken to treat them in a general manner, and not to lavish on them the time and trouble which would be better spent on more important parts ; nor should their details be too highly wrought to the injury of the breadth of effect.

BREADTH.—By this term is meant that treatment by which the forms, lights, shadows, and colours are arranged in masses, thus obtaining grandeur of effect and expression. Breadth is destroyed by small detached lights and shades scattered irregularly over the picture, and by giving minor objects the prominence belonging only to the most important features.

BACKGROUND is a term given to that part of a picture behind the leading objects or figures. As it gradually recedes it becomes the “distance.” Upon the happy arrangement of the background much of the effect of the picture depends.

MIDDLE TINT, as the words imply, are those tints which are almost equally removed from light or darkness.

DISTEMPER, or TEMPERA PAINTING, is a method of painting in which the colours (generally in powder or lump) are mixed with gum, size, or other glutinous medium. It was in general use before the introduction of oil painting in 1410.

FORESHORTENING.—When any figure, building, or other object is so placed that the length is more or less diminished in appearance, it is said to be foreshortened. Thus, in a drawing of a figure extending its arm towards the spectator, the arm would be foreshortened.

HARMONY, as applied to painting, means the proper agreement with each other of the colours, lines, lights, shadows, and, indeed, all the component parts of a picture.

LOCAL COLOURS are those belonging to the individual parts of, and objects in, a picture. These should be carefully



harmonised, so that an unimportant object, although of a bright local colour, may not be more prominent than its position as an accessory may require. Small pieces of bright local colour, however, frequently serve to lighten up a picture when used with judgment.

RELIEF, in painting, is the proper detachment of one object from another—as a figure from its ground, &c.—so as to give to every portion of a picture the character of truth and distinctness.

TONE.—This term is most commonly used to denote depth or brilliancy of a painting, and is often used in place of “harmony.” Thus, if some part of a painting is said to be “out of tone” with the rest, it is meant that either the colours, lights, or shadows do not truly represent the distance at which the object ought to appear, or do not agree with the surrounding tints. The word “tone” is also often used for the prevailing hue of a painting representing the impression of particular effects.

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In the volume on “Sepia Painting,” the method of stretching paper was fully described ; but as it is not always convenient to the student of landscape painting to carry a drawing-board with him, or to devote the necessary time and attention to the process of stretching the paper, the “solid sketch-blocks” are recommended. These consist of a number of pieces of drawing-paper glued together by their edges, and pressed so as to form a solid mass, which is then attached to a piece of strong mill-board. As a drawing is finished, it is removed by running a penknife round under the edges, when another sheet of paper is presented ready for work.

The sketch-blocks are made of various kinds of paper, and may be had bound in a cover furnished with a pocket, in which the finished drawings may be placed.











PLATE I.

THE rock in the foreground should be sketched first, then the cliff and fortress in the background ; and when these are found to be correct, the two buoys are to be drawn.

The sky should be painted first, the tint used being composed of cobalt and lake. This tint should be carried lightly over the distant cliffs, and also over the water.

The picture is then to be proceeded with, and will be completed in about three washes of sepia, a few touches with a darker shade of the same being afterwards added.



## P L A T E II.

THIS plate is an example of clear and broad treatment, which renders great care in the outline all the more necessary.

The sketch should be commenced with the upper edge of the boat, to which the exact slant or inclination must be given, and the precise relation of the keel must be carefully observed.

The lumps of stone, ring, chain, and other details, are next to be added.

The sky is to be painted first, with a tint composed of indigo and lake.

The whole picture should be executed in two washes of sepia, the high lights being carefully spared up.





R. P. Lerch













R. Kestek





PLATE III.

Two studies are here presented, which will require careful and accurate drawing.

In the first—an angle turret-window—the body or cylindrical part should be sketched first, and a perpendicular is to be drawn through the middle, and on this perpendicular the point of the conical roof must be placed. The lower edge of the roof must be a carefully-balanced curve. The pendant is next to be drawn, and the various mouldings must be gradually diminished until they end in the ornamental ball on the perpendicular line. The window and other details are then to be added.

In the second example, the body of the turret is, as before, to be sketched first; then the roof; and subsequently the ornamental timber-work and moulding.

Both subjects should be outlined in sepia, so that the pencil lines may be rubbed out, and the paper cleaned of lead before the colours are applied.

The sky is to be tinted with a colour mixed of indigo and lake, and the subjects themselves are to be painted with three shades of sepia, together with a few spirited touches with the darkest shade, which should be added when the previous work is quite dry.



## P L A T E I V.

THE object forming the subject of this study is a further development of that given in Plate II., and shows the divisions of the planks of which the boat is formed. These lines should be sketched across the whole length, regardless of the interruption caused by the sail, the portions covered by which can be subsequently rubbed out. By this means the continuity is insured.

The sky tint consists of a pale wash of indigo, which is lost in fleecy clouds on the left side.

The boat, and accessories, are to be executed in three washes of sepia, with such darker markings, &c., as may be found necessary.



















PLATE V.

THE principal objects, viz., the ship on the beach, the second vessel in the middle distance, and the lighthouse in the background, afford excellent practice in tinting, and in rendering the details more or less prominent, according to the distance of each object from the spectator.

The ship on the beach is to be drawn first, and in this it will be observed, that although much detail appears, it is rendered in a few bold touches, not in a laboured manner. In the second vessel the detail is less apparent; and in the lighthouse minor points are hinted at, or suggested, rather than really drawn.

The sky is a simple tint of pale indigo, rather darker towards the right side. If in laying this on the outline of the lighthouse or of the distant sail should become injured, they may be restored by painting them with water, and rubbing them sharply with a piece of rag; or when the water has soaked in, the surface may be dabbed with a rag, and then the part requiring improvement may be rubbed with india-rubber, which will remove the colour.

## P L A T E VI.

THE two examples here given show part of the front and side of an old-fashioned farm-house, affording excellent studies for correct drawing, and the details should be carefully sketched.

The sky is to be tinted with a wash composed of cobalt and lake. After which the examples are to be worked in three washes of sepia, with such accidental markings in a darker shade of the same colour as the taste of the student may suggest.















PLATE VII.

IN outlining this picture, the great mass of rock on the left side should be sketched first, and this should be followed by the line of the beach, ending in the broken stones, &c., on the right side of the foreground.

The range of cliffs running into the distance are next to be sketched, and finally the ship and figure.

The sky colour to be mixed of light red and cobalt, the shading on the distant rocks being tinted with the same.

The picture is to be executed in three shades of sepia.

## P L A T E   V I I I .

THE square block forming the body of the house is to be the first part sketched, and to this the pyramidical roof is to be added, care being taken that the apex is over the middle of the whole block. The parapet wall slanting down from the side of the house is next to be drawn, then the buttress on the left side, and the other portions of the buildings and details. The same general plan is to be pursued in drawing the second study, remembering that the whole building must always be ascertained to be correct before any of the details are attempted.

The sky is to be tinted with a wash of light red and cobalt, and the lower portion of the picture is to receive a wash of pale sepia, with which both of the studies are to be carried through their first stage. They will be completed by two more washes.















PLATE IX.

THE principal object—the boat—must, of course, be the first part sketched in this picture. It will be found most convenient to begin at the left-hand corner, and carry the outline of the upper edge along as far as the projecting keel, which should then be drawn.

The distant side of the bows, and the stern end of the boat, then follow; and finally the top—baskets and other accessories.

The sky tint is composed of cobalt and light red.

The whole picture is then to be painted in two washes of sepia, and completed, with markings and details, in the third, or darkest shade.

Care must be taken that the divisions of the planks are not too strongly marked, in order that they may not interfere with the general form of the boat.

The baskets and lantern, although carefully sketched, as far as their general form is concerned, must not be executed with any degree of finish, but should preserve a free and artistic character.

## P L A T E X.

THE outlines of the two studies here presented will require but few instructions, being extremely simple. It is only necessary to bear in mind that the largest masses are to be sketched first, and that the general forms must be correct before the details are added.

The sky tint is composed of indigo and lake, and the subjects are painted in three washes of sepia.

Subjects such as these form excellent preliminary studies for painting in water colours, which the student may attempt before using other copies. Thus the first building may be tinted with light red, representing brickwork, and shaded with sepia, the slates being coloured with pale indigo. The second building may be tinted with pale yellow ochre, indicating stone, the tiles being painted with light red, shaded with sepia.





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PLATE XI.

THE distant water-line to be the first drawn in this picture. And this should be followed by the range of cliffs; and finally the ships.

The sky tint is composed of cobalt and madder brown, and requires careful working, in order to produce the variety in the clouds.

The cliffs are first to be covered with a very pale wash of sepia, and the shadows on them are to be painted with a tint very little darker, so that the whole range may not stand out too prominently.

The water is to be painted with two washes of sepia, excepting the part near the horizon, which is to receive a wash of a third and darker tint.

The white line for the surf, and the white sail, may either be spared up, or may be taken out in the manner already described.

## PLATE XII.

THE outline of the rocks, although decided, must not be hard; and the fissures, &c., although they are to be definitely marked, must not appear prominently.

The sky tint is composed of light red and cobalt, and it is to be carried over the whole of the rocks after they have been tinted with the first wash of sepia.

The water is to be mainly executed with the sky tint, pale sepia being used in the darker parts.

The picture is then to be completed with the second wash, with a few touches of the darkest tint very sparingly added.















PLATE XIII.

THE rocks in the foreground having been outlined, and the direction of the roadway having been traced, the hill with castle, and the distant rocks, are to be sketched.

This central mass is then to be covered with a wash of sepia, so pale as to be only in the smallest degree removed from clear water. The mound below, and the roadway, are to receive a rather darker wash, which may also be carried over the rocks and the foreground.

The sky tint is composed of cobalt and lake; and with this the castle and central rocks are to be shaded. This must be done in two washes, the object being rather darker than the sky; but care must be taken that the mass does not stand out in a hard manner.

The foreground is then to be finished with two shades of sepia.

## P L A T E X I V.

THE first line to be sketched is that dividing the foreground from the middle distance, at about one-third of the height. This is to be followed by the outline of the mound and foliage, with castle, &c., separating the middle distance from the middle distance proper, in which the range of hills is situated.

The picture having been thus divided into foreground, middle, and distance, the principal object—the mill—is next to be sketched, and this having been completed, the colouring is to be commenced.

The sky tint is composed of Indian red and cobalt, and this may be carried over the whole of the distance and middle distance.

The middle distance is next to be tinted in sepia of the palest hue, which is also to be carried over the foreground and the upper part of the mill.

The picture is then to be completed in two more washes, with such additional dark touches as the taste and knowledge of the student may suggest.













R.P. 1846



PLATE XV.

THE line of the mound on the left roadway and the bridge should be the first sketched ; then the distant hills, bridge, &c., and lastly the tower and details. The sky tint is composed of cobalt and light red, which is also to be carried over the hills in the distance.

The whole picture is then to be tinted with the first wash of sepia, which will form the local colour of the tower, bridge, and middle distance.

The work is then to be completed in two more washes of sepia.

## P L A T E X V I.

THE rocky foreground is to be sketched first, then the rocks on the left side, the cottages and distant mountain, and lastly the ship. It is not necessary that views such as this should be outlined in sepia ; when they have been very lightly sketched in pencil, they may be at once lightly tinted in with their local colour.

In this picture the sky colour is composed of indigo and light red, with which the mountain and shaded parts of the water are to be tinted.

The foreground, cottages, ship, &c., are to be painted in two washes of sepia, with darker touches.













R. P. 1861



PLATE XVII.

THE foreground having been sketched, the bridge and foliage in the middle distance are to follow, and, finally, the mountains are to be carefully outlined.

The sky tint is composed of indigo and light red.

This tint is to be carried over the sky, being lightened as it approaches the mountains, which, as well as the water, are to be washed over with the same colour.

The whole picture is then to be carried through its various stages with three shades of sepia.

## P L A T E X V I I I .

SKETCH the foreground and bridge.

Outline mountain and castle.

Colour the sky with a tint composed of indigo and light red, with which the mountain, castle, and water are also to be shaded.

A wash of very light sepia is then to be carried over the castle, mountain, bridge, foreground, &c., the latter being shaded with a darker tint. The foliage is also, in the first instance, to be painted with this colour, the darker parts being repeated with the darkest tone. The cattle are to be painted last.





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PLATE XIX.

OUTLINE foreground and bridge, then the large group of buildings, carefully noting that the apex of the spire is exactly over the middle of the tower. The distant buildings, mountains, &c., are then to be sketched.

The sky tint is composed of light red and cobalt, which may also be carried over the mountains and the roofs of the buildings, and over the shaded parts of the whole. A warm and soft tone is thus obtained, adding great beauty to the picture, which is then to be proceeded with in the manner already indicated, three washes of sepia being used.

## P L A T E   X X .

THE rock in the foreground and the Swiss chalet are to be the first portions drawn in this picture, and after these the rock on the right side and the distant mountains are to follow.

The distant mountains must not be outlined in colour, their form being indicated by the absence of the sky tint, which is composed of cobalt and light red. This wash is to be laid on with a full brush up to the outline of the distant glaciers, the lower part of which are to be tinted with the same colour of a lighter degree.

The sky tint is also to be carried over the range of hills behind the chalet, and also over the rock on the right-hand side.

The whole picture is then to be painted in three gradations of sepia; the figures to be finally drawn, so that their distinctness may not be diminished by the washes.















PLATE XXI.

THE building which forms the principal object in this picture is to be sketched first; its position on the mound on which it stands being considered, so that the apex of the tower may be just a little to the right of the middle of the picture.

The bridge, rocks, and other details are then to be drawn.

The sky tint is composed of light red and cobalt, and the whole work is to be proceeded with as in the last study.

## PLATE XXII.

THIS scene on the Rhine requires much care in sketching, containing as it does so great a variety of objects, and so much detail.

The line of beach is to be drawn first, and then the whole mass of buildings, the details of which should be accurately sketched.

The rocks, castle, &c., on the right side ; the shipping and the figures are then to be added.

The sky is to be tinted with pure cobalt, very thinly mixed ; and this should, in the first instance, be carried over the distant hills, the rocks on the right-hand side, and over the water, the lights on which may be either spared up, rubbed, or scratched out.

The picture is to be executed in three shades of sepia, the figures, rigging, and fine details being painted last of all















PLATE XXIII.

THE rocks on the right-hand side should be the first part drawn in this picture; and these are to be followed by the mass of cliff on which the ruined fort stands, the line of the horizon, and the shipping. The sky tint is composed of indigo and light red, and with the water also is to be painted, being merely retouched in some parts with the palest wash of sepia. The shaded parts of the waves must be done with a brush containing very pale colour, and held upright; the work being done more in single dabs than in a general wash.

The picture is then to be tinted in four gradations of sepia.

## . PLATE XXIV.

It will be evident that the island with the ruin should be drawn first, the bank and clump of trees on the right side next, and finally the hills in the distance.

The sky tint, composed of cobalt and lake, is to be carried over the mountains and the shaded portion of the water, the washes being repeated until the required depth of colour is obtained.

The student who has followed the instructions throughout, will, it is hoped, find but little difficulty in completing this picture in three washes of sepia, and will be well prepared to pursue the subject according to "The Course of Water-Colour Painting," which forms another volume of this series.





R. P. Leitch









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